

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Environmental Assessment NV-040-08-033
July 1, 2008**

Site Specific Environmental Assessment

EA # NV-040-08-033

FOR

Bald Mountain Area Exploration Plan

Exploration Plan #9

*Barrick Gold Inc.,
Bald Mountain Mine*

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- Exploration EA #9 – July 1, 2008

Revision 1.0



1. INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 2004, Placer Dome planned an extensive exploration program within their claim block around Bald Mountain Mine. The extent of this project area can be seen in Map Attachment 1. Placer Dome planned for up to 70 acres of bonded disturbance within this project area. A Programmatic EA was written for this proposal, but did not include site specific locations for the proposed disturbance. Since the time frame for the exploration program was 10 years, it was considered possible that some of this acreage of disturbance could be reclaimed and released during this time frame. Placer Dome could then disturb additional acreage as long as no more than 70 acres remained unreclaimed and unreleased at any one time. It was determined that 210 acres would be the maximum number of acres that could possibly be disturbed within this ten year time frame. This 210 acres of disturbance was used for analysis in the Programmatic EA, even though the total disturbance over the life of the project is unlikely to be that high.

The proposed action for this EA is a site specific exploration plan that is within the project area that was analyzed in the 2004 Bald Mountain Mine (BMM) Exploration Programmatic EA. This exploration plan EA is tiered to, and incorporates by reference, the October 2004 BMM Exploration Programmatic Environmental Assessment, NV040-04-023 and the 1995 Bald Mountain Mine Final Environmental Impact Statement. This EA analyzes the site specific disturbance of an exploration program where the exact location of each disturbance is known, as well as the season of disturbance. This EA also helps to track the proposed and cumulative disturbance that is associated with the bonded 2004 Bald Mountain Mine Exploration Plan.

1.1 Need for the Proposal

The need for the proposal is for the BLM to evaluate the authorization of a site specific drill plan, which is a legitimate use of the multiple-use designated public land.

The proponent's need for the proposal is to determine if economically viable precious metals-bearing deposits exist within the site specific drill sites, and define the nature and extent, shape, and economic value of precious metals-bearing deposits within the exploration Project Area.

1.2 Issues

There are no new issues different from those described in the Programmatic EA. These were mule deer habitat and two special status species habitat; the sage grouse and pygmy rabbit. Noxious weeds, new road proliferation and habitat fragmentation are continuing concerns that were addressed in the programmatic and will be further analyzed in this site specific plan.

1.3 Relationship to Planning

The relationship to planning is the same as described in the Programmatic EA.

2 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Proposed Action

Site specific exploration is being proposed for the project area as shown in Map Attachments 2-5. The new disturbance would include approximately 43,110 linear feet (14.8 acres) of new road cut and 112 new drill pads and associated sumps (5.0 acres) for a total of 19.8 acres of new disturbance. Previous disturbance totals 49.1 acres. This new proposal brings the total to 68.9 acres. Table one summarizes this proposed disturbance along with the previously permitted disturbance under this plan.

Table 1 – Disturbance Acreage (Amendment #9)

Disturbance Type	Previously Authorized Drill Holes	Proposed New Drill Holes	New Total Number	Previously Authorized Acres	Proposed Disturbance Acres	Total Acres
Shallow RC Holes >30 %	11	0	11	0.310	0.000	0.310
Shallow RC Holes 15-30	137	0	137	4.089	0.000	4.089
Shallow RC Holes <15 %	6	0	6	0.090	0.000	0.090
Deep RC Holes >30%	9	0	9	0.730	0.000	0.730
Deep RC Holes 15-30	105	112	217	3.648	4.988	8.636
Deep RC Holes <15 %	0	0	0	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Drill holes	268	112	380	8.867	4.988	13.855
	Previously Authorized road	Proposed New Road	Total Feet	Previous Acres	Proposed acres	Total Acres
Constructed Road Cut under 30% 11,132 (17.2 feet wide)	11,132	0	11,132	3.6	0	3.6
Constructed Road (general) 6,783 (15 feet wide)	49,574	43,111	92,685	17.072	14.845	31.917
Constructed Road Cut over 30% 3,723 feet (12.7 feet wide)	6,783	0	6,783	2.27	0	2.27

Cross Country Road 5,271 feet (10 feet wide)	5,271	0	5,271	1.21	0	1.21
Total Road Disturbance	72,760	43,111	115,871	24.152	14.845	38.997
Sub total disturbance For this Plan				33.019	19.8	52.852
Previously Disturbed (Old South Casino Plan)				16.1	0	16.1
Total				49.119	19.8	68.952

¹ No more than 70 acres will be disturbed and unreclaimed at any one time.

Total acreage of new disturbance for this exploration project would be 19.8 acres. Drill pad acres were calculated as follows:

43,111 feet of linear road@15' wide	(14.8 acres)
112 Deep RC Holes and associated sumps	(5.0 acres)
	(19.8 acres)

New disturbance for this exploration plan (19.8 acres) and existing cumulative disturbance (49.1 acres) that is tracked under the Bald Mountain Mine Exploration Program and Programmatic EA comes to 68.9 acres. This EA will analyze only the 19.8 acres of new disturbance. The new total brings the Exploration Project as a whole to the limit of evaluated impacts for active/unreclaimed exploration operations under the Programmatic EA.

Drill roads are estimated at a 15 foot width for average terrain. Most of the road construction is on grade less than 30% where a 15 foot disturbance is a conservative estimate. Roads on greater than 30% may be slightly wider, but for ease of calculation, the 15 foot disturbance was used for all. At each site, the drill rig or other heavy equipment would push out a small ditch to create a sump and a pad for staging. The drill program is expected to be completed during the summer months of 2008. All drill holes would be plugged before the drill rig left the site, thereby keeping with the commitment that there would be only one open drill hole per drill rig at any one time. There could be up to six drill rigs in operation for the drill program at any one time. Reclamation of the disturbed areas will immediately follow active operations except in areas where near term additional exploration and/or development is expected.

The reclamation bond estimate for this exploration program is covered under the \$175,700 bonded in the Bald Mountain Mine Exploration Plan of Operations and Reclamation Permit Application N-78825.

An in-depth description of drilling activities and road building is described on pages 8 and 9 of the Programmatic EA. Reclamation of disturbed areas is described on pages 10 through 12.

Site specific standard operating procedures would be followed as shown in Appendix A.

2.2 Alternatives to the Proposed Action

2.2.1 Other Alternatives

No other alternatives are needed to address unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

2.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative, this site specific exploration plan would not be approved. Drilling would not occur as shown, but there could be other site specific plans within the exploration boundaries that could occur in the future.

3. Description of the Affected Environment and Associated Environmental Consequences

All potentially affected critical elements of the human environment and resources are described and analyzed in the Programmatic Agreement. For this exploration plan analysis, these elements and resources are divided into three categories:

1. Resources or elements that would not be present or affected by the site specific locations.
2. Resources or elements that are present at the site specific locations and could be affected, but do not need further analysis beyond what was provided in the Programmatic EA.
3. Resources or elements that may be present at the site specific locations and could be affected. These require further analysis in this EA to address potential concerns.

Each of these categories is shown below with the appropriate resources or human elements that were addressed in the Programmatic EA or that will be further addressed in this EA.

1. Following are the resources or elements that are not affected by, or located near, the site specific exploration plan:

Threatened, Endangered and Special Status Plant Species
Riparian Areas

2. Following are the resources or elements that are present and could be affected by the site specific exploration plan. However, there would be no site specific analysis necessary in addition to the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

Air Quality
Native American Religious Concerns
Water Quality (drinking/ground)
Wastes (hazardous or solid)
Migratory Birds
Vegetation
Soils
Geology/Minerals
Lands/Access
Livestock Grazing/Range
Recreation
Wild Horses
Wildlife (including mule deer habitat)
Visual Resource Management
Hazardous Materials
Socioeconomics

3. Following are the resources or elements that may be present at the site specific locations and could be affected. These require impact analysis in addition to the analysis in the Programmatic EA.

Non-native, Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds
Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Animal Species (including sage grouse and pygmy rabbit habitat)
Cultural Resources

These three resources will be further described and analyzed in this EA. See the Programmatic EA for discussion of all other resources.

3.1 Non-Native, Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds

Affected Environment

The BLM has conducted an inventory of weeds along the major roadways in the project area and SRK has done periodic field surveys for proposed drill sites within the project areas for the past couple of years. A site by site survey was not completed for this Amendment. It is previously documented that bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), and black henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*) occur in the vicinity of Alligator Ridge and Yankee Mines, where the southernmost drill holes are proposed. Previous surveys in the Mooney Basin area, site of the proposed northern drill holes, revealed no noxious weeds. However, leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), and musk thistle have been found along the County Road from Long Valley to Ruby Valley. Other invasive species, such as cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola iberica*) are prevalent in areas of previous disturbance, including roadside edges. Cheatgrass can be found in the understory of undisturbed habitats.

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The BLM is engaged in an active noxious weed control program with the Tri County Weed Program. Barrick has been involved in a weed control program throughout their claim boundary as well and it will continue for the life of mining. A more extensive survey of the entire exploration claim block could aid in controlling weed infestations by providing better mapping. This area of proposed action would have continued monitoring. Any new disturbance can create conditions favorable for the establishment of invasive, non native weeds and other undesirable plants. The use of standard operating procedures as described on page 37 of the Programmatic EA will minimize this risk. The site specific SOPs are shown in Appendix A. The noxious and invasive weed risk assessment is shown in Appendix B.

No Action Alternative

See page 37 of the Programmatic EA for a discussion of the potential impacts of the No Action alternative.

3.2 Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Animal Species

Affected Environment

Wildlife species of concern that could be affected on a site specific basis for this exploration plan are the sage grouse and the pygmy rabbit. No special status plant species have been identified in the project area.

Sage Grouse - All drill locations would be in summer sage grouse habitat. Proposed drill sites that are east of the Alligator Ridge and Yankee mine sites would be in winter sage grouse habitat. The majority of the proposed southern drill holes and the western most drill holes in Mooney Basin would be in nesting habitat. The southern most proposed drill hole, PV-CE, is about 0.6 miles northwest of the closest documented lek. All other proposed drill sites are more than a mile from any known lek.

Pygmy Rabbit – Previous surveys have identified some Pygmy Rabbits and their habitat near the Yankee Mine. Eight of the proposed drill sites are close to this habitat. Proposed drill hole PY-EC is in an area immediately adjacent to a drainage where Pygmy Rabbits and their habitat were identified. Drill holes PV-CG and PV-CE occur in low sagebrush, not likely to be in preferred habitat. Proposed drill hole PV-BE is not within the previous rabbit survey area, but it is not likely to be within Pygmy Rabbit habitat according to a July 7, 2008 report by Gary Back of Great Basin Ecology, Inc.

“Only proposed drill hole PV-BE was not previously surveyed for pygmy rabbits, and to some extent, noxious weeds¹. This site and access to the site would need to be surveyed. However, the pygmy habitat model that I developed while at SRK has been useful in predicting where we may find this rabbit. The area around proposed drill hole PV-BE is in primarily low sagebrush adjacent to Wyoming big sagebrush. The soils that support low sagebrush are not considered pygmy rabbit habitat as they are not conducive to burrowing and low sagebrush is not considered pygmy rabbit habitat. Therefore, it is unlikely that any pygmy rabbits exist at this site.”

The other four proposed drill holes that are northeast of the Yankee Mine are located near, but not within, identified Pygmy Rabbit Habitat.

There are 23 proposed drill holes near the Alligator Ridge Mine which again has some previously surveyed Pygmy Rabbit Habitat. Twenty of these sites fall within the survey area, but outside of suitable or occupied pygmy rabbit habitat. Three proposed drill sites are outside of the survey area, but occur in Pinyon Juniper vegetation and not likely to be within Pygmy Rabbit Habitat according to the Gary Back report cited previously.

There are 72 proposed drill holes within the Mooney Basin area. The following excerpt from the July 2008 Gary Back report summarizes the existing environment for Pygmy Rabbits:

“This area was surveyed in 2007 by SRK as part of the Bald Mountain Project Area Biological Baseline Report (SRK 2008). The pygmy rabbit habitat model was developed for this baseline project and was used to identify potential pygmy rabbit habitat based on current vegetation, soil depths, slope, and elevation. The area around Mahoney Canyon was identified as potential pygmy rabbit habitat; however, upon field checking the model, it was determined that the published data regarding the current vegetation was out-of-date and that more P-J existed in the area. There had also been wildfires in the area, eliminating the sagebrush cover.

All of the proposed drill sites are located in P-J, burned areas, or areas where the slope is too steep for deep soil accumulation. The only sites in the canyon floor where soils are likely to be suitable are the sites centered in Figure 4. This area was surveyed during the baseline studies and no pygmy rabbits were found. The P-J has encroached on the sagebrush that formerly occupied this area and the suitability for pygmy rabbits had declined markedly.”

Mule Deer – Most all of the drill holes are within mule deer winter habitat, but none are within crucial winter habitat. Twelve of the most northwestern proposed drill holes are within NDOW 2006 Limited Deer Habitat. The mule deer migration corridor extends into the project area.

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

Sage Grouse - The drilling program is expected to be completed by the end of 2008 and likely by the fall season. Therefore all disturbances would occur outside of sage grouse nesting season. If further mine expansion does not occur in future years, reclamation of all new disturbances would be completed. This reclamation would further mitigate any potential impact to sage grouse and pygmy rabbit habitat by increasing vegetation and closing spur roads to vehicle traffic. Fewer roads in the area would reduce habitat fragmentation for these and other wildlife species. All other aspects of the impact analysis are the same as that described in the Programmatic EA.

Pygmy Rabbit – There are five drill sites and associated access that are outside of areas previously surveyed for pygmy rabbits. Four of these sites are in habitat unlikely to be occupied by Pygmy Rabbit. However, to ensure that no impact to this species will occur, the sites should be surveyed.

Site PY-EC near the south end of the Yankee boundary is located very close, if not within, pygmy rabbit habitat. The location of this site should be field checked prior to drilling.

Because of the avoidance of pygmy rabbit habitat, the project is unlikely to affect pygmy rabbits and their habitat, or contribute to the listing of this species as threatened or endangered.

Mule Deer – In general, re-seeding of disturbed areas has provided increased forage and browse for mule deer. The spur roads should have no effect on mule deer migration corridors. Habitat fragmentation is discussed on page 42 of the programmatic EA.

Other T&E species – Due to the lack of observations of special status species or their sign, no impact to any special status species is anticipated from the proposed exploration activities.

No Action Alternative

See page 42 of the Programmatic EA for a discussion of the potential impacts of the No Action alternative.

3.3 Cultural Resources

Affected Environment

Recent Class III intensive cultural resource inventories have taken place over the entire project area. These inventories located numerous prehistoric and historic cultural resources. From this information, the proposed project was designed to avoid any impacts to these cultural resources. Drill sites and roads that within 150 meters of cultural sites will be monitored by a qualified archaeologist during earth disturbing activities.

Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

The proposed action will avoid impacts to identified cultural resources through project avoidance of all cultural resources. Therefore, the proposed action will not have any effect on cultural resources.

No Action Alternative

See page 36 of the Programmatic EA for a discussion of the potential impacts of the No Action alternative.

3.4 Cumulative Impacts

Comprehensive analysis of cumulative impacts in the Bald Mountain Mine region is contained in Appendix B, pages B-1 through B-129 of the Bald Mountain Mine Expansion Project Final

Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS,1995). The Programmatic EA for the Bald Mountain Mine Exploration Project complimented this document with further analysis of non-native invasive plant species and noxious weeds, special status species (sage grouse and pygmy rabbit) and wildlife (mule deer migration). This site specific EA tiers to, and incorporates by reference, both of these documents. No further analysis of cumulative impacts is needed for this proposed action.

4.0 Proposed Mitigation Measures

Appropriate mitigation has been included through the SOPs in the Proposed Action. See Appendix A. No additional mitigation is proposed as a result of the impact analysis.

5.0 Monitoring

Cultural Monitoring is recommended for drill sites that are within 150 meters of a cultural site and in accordance with the recommendations by Robert Kautz, the archaeological contractor for Barrick Gold Inc. Field checks for Pygmy Rabbits will be required for drill site PY-EC prior to drilling and recommended for drill sites PY-EA, PV-AT, PV-CA, and PV-CB. See Map Attachment 6.

Appropriate monitoring has been included through the SOPs in the Proposed Action. See Appendix A. No additional monitoring is proposed as a result of the impact analysis.

6. Consultation and Coordination

There was little public interest in the Bald Mountain Mine Programmatic Exploration EA during scoping in July of 2004 and the subsequent public comment period from September 13 to October 12, 2004. The Programmatic EA was discussed in the monthly coordination meetings with the Native American Tribes at the Ely Field Office Bureau of Land Management. This site specific EA will be discussed during the next tribal coordination meeting, likely to occur to July of 2008. A public notification regarding the proposed action is included in the Ely FO website. The preliminary and final EAs will be posted on this site as well.

List of Preparers

U.S. Bureau of Land Management – Ely Field Office

Lynn Bjorklund	Project Lead, Plan Review, Geology/Minerals
Shawn Gibson	Cultural Resources
Elvis Wall	Native American Religious Concerns
Bonnie Waggoner	Invasive, Non-native Species
Gina Jones	NEPA Coordinator
Marian Lichtler	Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands, Migratory Birds
Kalem Lenard	Recreation, VRM
Dave Jacoboson	Wilderness
Kari Harrison	Soils, water, air
Doris Metcalf	Lands
Melanie Peterson	Hazardous Materials

7.0 References

Bald Mountain Mine, 2004. *Bald Mountain Mine Exploration Plan of Operations and Reclamation Permit Application N-78825*. October 2004

Bald Mountain Project Area Biological Baseline Report (SRK 2008)

Back, Gary, Amendment 9 Biological Report, July 2008, Great Basin Ecology, Inc.

Kautz, Robert – Amendment 9 Archaeology recommendations. July 2008

8.0 Appendix A

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs) FOR BALD MOUNTAIN MINE EXPLORATION PLAN

1. Any change or amendment to your minerals operation must be brought to the attention of the Ely Field Office Manager or an authorized officer prior to implementation of the change on the ground.
2. Cultural resource inventories will be conducted on all proposed areas of potential surface disturbing impacts, including appropriate buffer zones, prior to authorization of the mineral operations. Inventories will be completed by BLM or BLM-approved cultural resource permit holders.
3. A noxious weed survey will be completed prior to any earth disturbing activity including cross-country travel. Noxious or invasive weeds that may be located on the site will be managed according to methods to be approved by the Authorized Officer. Should chemical methods be approved, the lessee must submit a Pesticide Use Proposal to the Authorized Officer 60 days prior to the planned application date. A Pesticide Application Report must be submitted to the Authorized Officer by the end of each fiscal year following chemical application.
4. Existing access must be used whenever possible. Off-road vehicular travel shall be held to an absolute minimum necessary to complete operations. Additional roads, if needed, will be kept to an absolute minimum and the location of routes must be approved by the Authorized Officer prior to construction.
5. All survey monuments, claim markers, witness corners, reference monuments, bearing trees, etc., must be protected against destruction, obliteration or damage. When operations are concluded, the operator will remove all survey markers, stakes, flagging, etc., for which the operator has no further need.
6. Removal or alteration of existing improvements (fences, cattle guards, etc.) is not allowed without prior approval of the Authorized Officer. Existing improvements will be maintained in a serviceable and safe condition. Upon completion of operations, any authorized facility alterations will be restored to the specifications of the authorized officer.
7. All vegetative clearing will be held to the minimum necessary to accommodate the planned operation.
8. No blasting will be permitted if it will be detrimental to the significant characteristics of archeological or historical values, recreation areas, known caves, water wells, or springs.
9. During periods of adverse conditions affecting soil moisture caused by climatic factors such as thawing, heavy rains, snow, flooding, or drought, all activities off existing maintained roads that create excessive surface rutting may be suspended. When adverse conditions exist, the operator will contact the Authorized Officer for an evaluation and decision based on soil types, soil moisture, slope, vegetation, and cover.
10. All trash, garbage, debris, and foreign matter must be removed and properly disposed. Site must be maintained and left in a clean and safe condition. Burning will not be allowed at the site.
11. No oil or lubricants will be drained onto the ground surface. Any spills under 25 gallons will be immediately cleaned up; spills over 25 gallons will be reported to the Authorized Officer and NDEP.
12. All construction, operation, and maintenance activities will comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations regarding the use of hazardous substances and the protection of air and water quality.

13. The operator will work with the Authorized Officer on the containment of drilling fluids and drill hole cuttings. Mud, separation pits, and other containments used for the storage of any hazardous materials will be adequately fenced, posted, and/or covered.
14. Powder magazines will be located at least 0.25-mile from traveled roads. Loaded shot holes and charges will be attended at all times. Use of explosives will be according to applicable Federal and State regulations.
15. The operator will make every effort to prevent, control, or suppress any fire in the operating area. The operator may be required to have fire-fighting equipment available on-site while operations are in progress, depending on hazards inherent in the type of operation and fire hazard levels. Reports of uncontrolled fires will be relayed immediately to the Ely Field Office Manager or Authorized Officer. The BLM Fire Dispatch telephone number is (775) 289-1925 or 1-800-633-6092. After working hours call 911 or the White Pine County Sheriff's office at (775) 289-8801, the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office at (775) 962-5151, or the Nye county Sheriff's Office at (775) 482-8101.
16. Lands containing unstable/highly erodible soils may require additional protective measures such as restrictions on surface entry during periods of excessive runoff, avoidance of selected areas, and special reclamation techniques.
17. All decisions issued by the Ely Field Office will have a Needs Assessment completed in accordance with the Nevada BLM and SHPO Protocol.
18. Documentation (photos, drawings, etc.) will be collected on all sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. This will allow tracking of human and natural caused deterioration.
19. If cultural resources (historic or archaeological materials) are discovered during construction, the operator is to immediately stop work protect such materials, and contact the Authorized Officer. Within five working days, the Authorized Officer will inform the operator as to:
 - a. The appropriate treatment measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not feasible);
 - b. A timeframe for the Authorized Officer to complete an expedited review and necessary consultation;
 - c. The operator's responsibility for treatment costs; and
 - d. Technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of the treatment. Upon verification from the Authorized Officer that the required treatment has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.
20. All identified cultural resources will be avoided by project-related activities per the Nevada BLM standards for cultural resources. If avoidance is not feasible, mineral activities must cease until mitigating measures or treatments are developed and implemented and Section 106 consultation is completed. Archaeological monitors may be required in special cases.
21. The operator is responsible for informing all persons associated with the project that knowingly disturbing cultural resources (historic or archaeological) or collecting artifacts is illegal.
22. During winter operations, requirements for cultural resource inventories may be waived by the Authorized Officer if the unsurveyed areas are located on bare and frozen ground or are completely covered (100%) by snow and the snow is sufficiently deep (approximately 4 to 6 inches) to prevent ground disturbing ruts. Should conditions change while operations are in progress, additional considerations may be necessary.

The operator must contact the authorized officer to determine if an archaeological monitor or an inventory may be required prior to continuance of mineral activities.

23. Any activity planned within the viewshed of the Pony Express National Historic Trail or other National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) properties, listed National Register Districts, or properties eligible under criterion A, must undergo a visual assessment. Appropriate mitigation of visual impacts will be implemented as necessary to keep the setting of the management corridor in as natural a condition as possible. Special reclamation measures may be required to restore the setting to its natural condition.
24. Under no circumstances will wild horses, burros, wildlife, or livestock be willfully harassed. When traveling roads, all livestock gates will be closed after use.
25. To protect wildlife and wild horses, perimeter fences will be flagged every 16 feet with white flagging. The flagging should be at least one inch wide and with at least twelve inches hanging free from the top wire of the fence. Fences will also avoid obvious horse migration routes (deep trails, stud piles) if at all possible.
26. If the project involves heavy or sustained traffic, road signs for safety and protection of wild horses and wildlife will be required.
27. Any new disturbance commencing between April 15 and July 15 must first be surveyed for nesting migratory birds. If nests are found, the project may be moved or delayed until July 15.
28. Any identified bald eagle roost sites, peregrine falcon hawk sites, and occupied raptor aeries (nests) will be avoided during mineral operations. A 0.5-mile buffer zone will be imposed on all activities around occupied nests.
29. Actions which will adversely impact a special status species (including federally listed, proposed, and candidate species, state protected species, and BLM sensitive species or its habitat, will be modified in order to prevent possible future listing of these species as threatened or endangered. The following restrictions apply to the following species:
 - a. Sage Grouse. No surface disturbance will be allowed within an active sage grouse lek. No surface use will be allowed within ½ mile of an active sage grouse lek from midnight until 10 a.m. during the period March 15 through May 31.
 - b. Ferruginous Hawk. Ferruginous Hawk nest sites will not be disturbed. No surface use will be allowed within ½ mile of an occupied Ferruginous Hawk nest during the period March 1 through June 30 or until the birds have fledged (left) the nest.
 - c. Mule Deer Habitat SOP
Within the Ely District, there are identified mule deer key habitats. (Key Habitats include habitats such as crucial habitats. These habitats are essential to populations of big game. If elements of these habitats are compromised, the results could be detrimental to the population.) Therefore, prior to entry onto the land, the operator will discuss the proposed activity with the appropriate Bureau of Land Management's authorized officer. Additional measures may be required for the protection of the deer and their habitat which may include:
 - i. Limitation on surface use during the period of crucial deer use.
 - ii. Minimizing disturbance to habitat and forage.
 - d. Pygmy Rabbit SOP - Within the Ely District, there are favorable habitats selected by pygmy rabbits as burrowing areas. Therefore, prior to entry into these areas the operator will discuss the proposed activities with the Bureau of Land Managements authorized officer who may require additional measures for the protection of pygmy rabbits and their habitats. Such measures may include:

- i. Avoidance of selected areas
 - ii. Restriction of activities near burrows during the months of April through June.
30. To eliminate the transport of vehicle-borne weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes, all vehicles and heavy equipment used for the completion, maintenance, inspection, or monitoring of ground disturbing activities; for emergency fire suppression; or for authorized off-road driving will be free of soil and debris capable of transporting weed propagules. All such vehicles and equipment will be cleaned with power or high pressure equipment prior to entering or leaving the work site or project area. Vehicles used for emergency fire suppression will be cleaned as a part of check-in and demobilization procedures. Cleaning efforts will concentrate on tracks, feet or tires, and on the undercarriage. Special emphasis will be applied to axles, frames, cross members, motor mounts, on and underneath steps, running boards, and front bumper/brush guard assemblies. Vehicle cabs will be swept out and refuse will be disposed of in waste receptacles. Cleaning sites will be recorded using GPS or other mutually acceptable equipment and provided to the BLM Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
31. Prior to the entry of vehicles and equipment to a project area, areas of concern will be identified and flagged in the field by a weed scientist or qualified biologist. The flagging will alert personnel or participants to avoid areas of concern.
32. Prior to entering public lands, the Contractor, Operator, or permit holder will provide information and training regarding noxious weed management and identification to all personnel who will be affiliated with the implementation and maintenance phases of the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and the importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.
33. To eliminate the transport of soil-borne noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes, infested soils or materials will not be moved and redistributed on weed-free or relatively weed-free areas. In areas where infestations are identified or noted and infested soils, rock, or overburden must be moved, these materials will be salvaged and stockpiled adjacent to the area from which they were stripped. Appropriate measures will be taken to minimize wind and water erosion of these stockpiles. During reclamation, the materials will be returned to the area from which they were stripped.
34. Prior to project approval, a site specific weed survey will occur and a Weed Risk Assessment will be completed. Monitoring will be conducted for a period no shorter than the life of the permit or until bond release and monitoring reports will be provided to the BLM. If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, appropriate weed control procedures will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel and will be in compliance with the appropriate BLM Handbook sections and applicable laws and regulations. All weed control efforts on BLM lands will be in compliance with BLM Handbook H-9011, H-9011-1 Chemical Pest Control, H-9014 Use of Biological Control Agents of Pests on Public Lands, and H-9015 Integrated Pest Management. Submission of Pesticide Use Proposals (PUPs) and Pesticide Application Records (PARs) will be required.
35. All vehicles and heavy equipment used for the completion, maintenance, inspection, or monitoring of ground disturbing activities; for emergency fire suppression; or for authorized off-road driving that are used to drive through, mow, harvest, scrape, or otherwise contact plant species listed on the Nevada Noxious Weed list or specifically identified by the Ely Field Office will be cleaned prior to continued use in weed free areas. Cleaning requirements are described in SOP# 1.2.5.4.
36. For mineral activity, retain bonds for weed control until the site is returned to desired vegetative conditions.
37. To provide for effective rehabilitation of the disturbed area, all available growth medium, as practical, will be removed and stockpiled. Any trees removed will be separated from soils and stockpiled separately.

38. Topsoil stockpiles and road berms, if scheduled to be left in place over the growing season, will be seeded with an approved site-specific interim seed mix to reduce erosion, preserve the biological flora and fauna, and prevent the establishment of noxious weeds and other undesirable plant species.
39. The operator shall reclaim the disturbed area concurrently or at the earliest feasible time by recontouring to conform with pre-existing topography (including filling of trenches), to the extent possible, followed by redistribution of stockpiled topsoil over the reclaimed area. Compacted areas will be ripped to a depth of 12 inches unless in solid rock. Ripped areas may need further work to break up large clods and produce a fine-grained seed bed.
40. Site preparation for reclamation may include contour furrowing, terracing, reduction of steep cut and fill slopes, and the installation of water bars, etc.
41. Reseeding may be required, in which case a site-specific seed mixture will be recommended by the operator and approved by the Authorized Officer. Seeding is recommended only between October 1 and March 15 for the northern part of the District, and November 1 through March 1 for the southern part of the District.
42. Reclamation will normally be accomplished with native seeds only. These will be representative of the indigenous species present in the adjacent habitat. Rationale for potential seeding with selected non-natives must be documented. Possible exceptions could include use of non-natives for a temporary cover crop to out-compete weeds. Where large acreages are burned by the fires and seeding is required for erosion control, all native species can be cost prohibitive and/or unavailable. In all cases, seed mixes will be approved by the Authorized Officer prior to planting.
43. All interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, and hay/straw products must be tested for noxious weeds and certified free of plant species listed on the Nevada Noxious Weed list.
44. All drill holes must be plugged per Nevada State statute (Division of Water Resources "Regulations for Water Well and Related Drilling") as warranted. If artesian flow is encountered, the drill hole must be plugged immediately. The location, depth, and relative flow rate of any water intercepted shall be reported to the Ely Field Office Manager or the Authorized Officer. Drill cuttings will be returned to the hole if possible, or at a minimum, raked and spread out so as not to impede regrowth of vegetation or to create erosion problems.
45. The Ely Field Office Manager or the Authorized Officer will be notified within 5 days of completion of reclamation work so that timely compliance inspections can be completed.
46. The area is considered to be satisfactorily reclaimed when all disturbed areas have been recontoured to blend with the natural topography, erosion has been stabilized, and an acceptable vegetative cover has been established. The Nevada Guidelines for Successful Revegetation for the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S.D.A Forest Service (or most current revision or replacement of this document) will be used to determine if revegetation is successful.
47. In areas of known noxious weed infestations, monitoring of noxious weeds will be conducted on an annual basis. Monitoring will be conducted until project release. If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, the infested areas will be further evaluated to determine the appropriate remedial action and appropriate treatment. Appropriate weed control procedures, including target species, timing of control, and method of control, will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel.
48. No noxious weeds will be allowed on the site for reclamation release. Any noxious weeds that become established will be controlled.

Appendix B

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR NOXIOUS & INVASIVE WEEDS

Bald Mountain Mine Exploration Plan #9 White Pine County, Nevada

Recent field studies by SRK have identified the following species within the project area:

Canada thistle *Cirsium arvense*

The following species are found along roads and drainages leading to the project area:

Musk thistle *Carduus nutans*
Spotted knapweed *Centaurea stoebe*
Bull thistle *Cirsium vulgare*
Black henbane *Hyoscyamus niger*
Hoary cress *Lepidium draba*
Scotch thistle *Onoropodum acanthium*

While not mapped there is also probably cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*) scattered throughout the area.

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious/invasive weed species spreading to the project area.

None (0)	Noxious/invasive weed species are not located within or adjacent to the project area. Project activity is not likely to result in the establishment of noxious/invasive weed species in the project area.
Low (1-3)	Noxious/invasive weed species are present in the areas adjacent to but not within the project area. Project activities can be implemented and prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the project area.
Moderate (4-7)	Noxious/invasive weed species located immediately adjacent to or within the project area. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious/invasive weed species even when preventative management actions are followed. Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds within the project area.
High (8-10)	Heavy infestations of noxious/invasive weeds are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activities, even with preventative management actions, are likely to result in the establishment and spread of noxious/invasive weeds on disturbed sites throughout much of the project area.

This project rates as Moderate (6) at the present time. With the high amount of ground disturbance and heavy equipment it is likely that some areas within the project area will become infested.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious/invasive weed establishment in the project area.

Low to Nonexistent (1-3)	None. No cumulative effects expected.
Moderate (4-7)	Possible adverse effects on site and possible expansion of infestation within the project area. Cumulative effects on native plant communities are likely but limited.
High (8-10)	Obvious adverse effects within the project area and probable expansion of noxious/invasive weed infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant communities are probable.

For this project, the factor rates as Moderate (6) at the present time. A new infestation of weeds within the project area would have possible cumulative effects on the surrounding native plant communities however most of the area surrounding the project area is already disturbed with other mining operations. Any increase in cheatgrass in the project area could alter the fire regime in the area.

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

None (0)	Proceed as planned.
Low (1-10)	Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious/invasive weed populations that get established in the area.
Moderate (11-49)	Develop preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction of spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the area. Preventative management measures should include modifying the project to include seeding the area to occupy disturbed sites with desirable species. Monitor the area for at least 3 consecutive years and provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.
High (50-100)	Project must be modified to reduce risk level through preventative management measures, including seeding with desirable species to occupy disturbed site and controlling existing infestations of noxious/invasive weeds prior to project activity. Project must provide at least 5 consecutive years of monitoring. Projects must also provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.

For this term permit renewal, the Risk Rating is Moderate (36) at the present time. Preventive management measures for noxious weeds should be developed to prevent spread of noxious species into the project area. These measures (mitigation) are as follows:

- Prior to entering public lands, the contractor, operator, or permit holder will provide information and training regarding noxious weed management and identification to all personnel who will be affiliated with the implementation and maintenance phases of the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.
- Prior to the entry of vehicles and equipment to a project area, areas of concern will be identified and flagged in the field by a weed scientist or qualified biologist. The flagging will alert personnel or participants to avoid areas of concern. These sites will be recorded using global positioning systems or other Ely Field Office approved equipment and provided to the Field Office Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
- To eliminate the transport of vehicle-borne weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all vehicles and heavy equipment used for the completion and maintenance of ground disturbing activities will be free of soil and debris capable of transporting weed propagules. All such vehicles and equipment will be cleaned with power or high pressure equipment prior to entering or leaving the work site or project area. Cleaning efforts will concentrate on tracks, feet and tires, and on the undercarriage. Special emphasis will be applied to axels, frames, cross members, motor mounts, on and underneath steps, running boards, and front bumper/brush guard assemblies. Vehicle cabs will be swept out and refuse will be disposed of in waste receptacles. Cleaning sites will be recorded using global positioning systems or other mutually acceptable equipment and provided to the Field Office Noxious and Invasive Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
- Removal and disturbance of vegetation would be kept to a minimum through construction site management (e.g. using previously disturbed areas and existing easements, limiting equipment/materials storage and staging area sites, etc.)

- To eliminate the introduction of noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all source sites such as borrow pits, fill sources, or gravel pits used to supply inorganic materials used for construction, maintenance, or reclamation will be inspected and found to be free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list or specifically identified by the BLM Ely Field Office. Inspections will be conducted by a weed scientist of qualified biologist.
- To eliminate the introduction of noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, hay/straw, or other organic products used for reclamation or stabilization activities, feed, bedding will be certified free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list or specifically identified by the BLM Ely Field Office.
- If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, appropriated weed control procedures will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel and will be in compliance with the appropriate BLM handbook sections and applicable laws and regulations. All weed control efforts on BLM-administered lands will be in compliance with BLM Handbook H-9011, H-9011-1 Chemical Pest Control, H-9014 Use of Biological Control Agents of Pests on Public Lands, and H-9015 Integrated Pest Management. Should chemical methods be approved, the lessee must submit a Pesticide Use Proposal to the Authorized Officer 60 days prior to the planned application date. A pesticide Application Report must be submitted to the Authorized Officer by the end of the fiscal year follow chemical application.
- Mixing of herbicides and rinsing of herbicide containers and spray equipment would be conducted only in areas that are safe distance from environmentally sensitive areas and points of entry to bodies of water (storm drains, irrigation ditches, streams, lakes, or wells).
- Reclamation would normally be accomplished with native seeds only. These would be representative of the indigenous species present in the adjacent habitat. Rationale for potential seeding with selected nonnative species would be documented. Possible exceptions would include use of non-native species for a temporary cover crop to out-compete weeds. Where large acreages are burned by fires and seeding is required for erosion control, all native species could be cost prohibitive and/or unavailable. In all cases, seed mixes would be approved by the BLM Authorized Officer prior to planting.
- No noxious weeds will be allowed on the site at the time of reclamation release. Any noxious weeds that become established will be controlled.

Reviewed by:

Bonnie Million
Ely District Noxious & Invasive Weeds Coordinator

7/8/2008

Date